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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/25/2016

TAGS: PREL PTER SP NO

SUBJECT: (C) NORWAY HELPED BROKER THE SPAIN-ETA DEAL

Classified By: P/E Counselor Mike Hammer, reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) On March 24, Norwegian radio/TV reported that Norway has secretly been involved in facilitating the talks between the Spanish Government and ETA over the past few months. According to the press report, the two sides met for talks in Oslo last fall and other nations, such as Switzerland, were also involved. The Foreign Ministry has not commented on the reports, which state that the Norwegian role started before the current government took office last October.

¶2. (C) Foreign Minister Jonas Stoere confided to the Ambassador (on 3/24) that he personally had played a role in getting the ETA ceasefire agreement. Stoere said that he did not intend to confirm this role publicly, and asked us to treat Norway's role involvement confidentially. He noted that not even his staff were aware of the extent of his engagement. Stoere opined that if the ceasefire holds for the next 4-5 months, there is a real prospect for a long-term settlement between ETA and Madrid.

¶3. (C) Comment. It is surprising that Stoere is being so restrained about not bragging about what role he may have played in bringing about an ETA ceasefire, given his recent penchant for turning to the press to publicize his every move. Stoere did not specify when these Norwegian efforts began. In fact, the extent of Norway's involvement does not seem to be widely known even within the Norwegian MFA, but we will endeavor to put together a more complete picture of Norway's role in the coming days. The Ambassador used this opportunity to stress to FM Stoere that we would appreciate open and early consultation as he pursues his (overly?) active foreign policy.

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